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*Bentlage per
NSC FEB 1961 C.*

11 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL TAYLOR

SUBJECT: Material for Kennedy Library Interviews

1. I have uncovered some information which should help refresh your memory on the events surrounding the developing Berlin situation in the summer of 1961. It is not as complete as I would like, but it is all that our White House files offer.
2. About the best bench mark for the initiation of the 1961 Berlin crisis seems to be the Kennedy-Khrushchev Vienna talks on 4-5 June. At this time Khrushchev handed the President an aide memoire. It called for a six-months' moratorium on a crisis over West Berlin while a conference on a German peace treaty was convened. Khrushchev said on 16 June he intended to push for the conclusion of a German peace treaty by the end of the year with or without Western agreement. These and subsequent USSR threats led to the President's 25 July speech. (Tab A) Colonel Legere says you were one of 3 or 4 people who commented on it. He took a copy to your quarters. There is nothing in the files on it, however.
3. Your files contained no memorandum for record concerning the decision to move a battle group to Berlin after the Soviets restricted access to East Berlin on 13 August. Your chronology file first mentions Berlin on 17 August in a brief paper on "Guidance for Berlin Contingency Planning" (Tab B). Judging from a cover note to Secretary McNamara, you had presented the viewpoints in the paper at a meeting with the President on the morning of 17 August. Your calendar shows two meetings with the President that day, one in the morning and one late in the day.
4. On 18 August you informed the President (Tab C) of the battle group movement into Berlin. By that time the decision clearly had been made to send them in.
5. On 24 August your file contains a one-page memorandum on the effects of GDR restrictions on Allied access to East Berlin. It is a strong paper (Tab D) which recommends forthright action to call the Soviets bluff. There is no addressee or evidence of its distribution,

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but I believe you handed it to the President. If it does not call for action to dismantle the wall, it does call for unrestricted access by Allied officials.

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6. On 25 August you wrote a brief memorandum (Tab E) to the President on General Clay. It implies that the recommendation to send General Clay to Berlin was suggested first by Secretary McNamara. You seem to have suggested first that the General report directly to the President.

7. With respect to the Vice President's trip to Berlin, the only reference in our White House files I can find is in a report of a meeting of the Interdepartmental Coordinating Group on Berlin and Germany of 15 August. Mr. Kohler ran the meeting. One matter discussed was to have a prominent national-level figure visit Berlin right away. Legere says the Vice President was mentioned prominently. He does not remember who made the suggestion, but everyone seemed taken by it. Legere says he almost suggested you as a possibility for the trip, but did not since he had not talked with you about it.

8. With respect to the 15 August public statement on Berlin by the ^{US} President that Mrs. Rostow mentions, our files reveal nothing about its development. (The NY Times Index shows the protest was made by the Allied Commandants to their counterpart in Berlin, so most of the drafting of the protest probably was done in Berlin.)

WJS
W. Y. S.

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